

Application Number: 20/10431 Full Planning Permission

Site: ST MARYS CHURCH, CHURCH STREET, FORDINGBRIDGE

Development: Re-covering of the roofs to the nave, the tower; gutter linings to chapel and chancel to be renewed

Applicant: The Parish of St.Mary, Fordingbridge

Agent: St. Ann's Gate Architects LLP

Target Date: 19/06/2020

Case Officer: Kate Cattermole

1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES

The key issues are:

- 1) the principle of development
- 2) impact on the significance of the Grade I Listed Building
- 3) Impact on the Fordingbridge Conservation Area

This application is to be considered by Committee because of a contrary view with Historic England, who are a statutory consultee

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal relates to St Mary's Church, which dates from the 12th Century, and its historical importance combined with its architectural significance has been recognized in its designation as a Grade I Listed Building. The Church occupies a prominent position within the Fordingbridge Conservation Area

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application is to replace the existing lead roof of the nave and tower roofs with terne coated stainless steel, and to renew the guttering lining to the chapel and chancel roofs. The lead roofs on the nave, the tower and the lead-lined outer parapet gutters of the chancel and the north eastern chapel were inspected by specialists working for the Church in 2018 and it was identified that these works were needed and overdue.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant

5 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Core Strategy

CS2: Design quality

CS3: Protecting and enhancing our special environment (Heritage and Nature Conservation)

Local Plan Part 2 Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document

DM1: Heritage and Conservation

DM2: Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity

The Emerging Local Plan

Policy 11 Heritage and conservation

Policy 13 Design quality and local distinctiveness

Policy 9 Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity

Supplementary Planning Guidance And Documents

SPG - Fordingbridge - A Conservation Area Appraisal

SPD - Fordingbridge Town Design Statement

Relevant Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 16 (2) and 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions requires special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Relevant Advice

National Planning Policy Guidance 2019

NPPF Ch.16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Particular reference is made to Paragraphs 190 ,193 194 and 196

6 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

Fordingbridge Town Council: recommend permission under PAR3 as the church has already used the material and it seems to be fine and better than lead which could be stolen.

7 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

No comments received

8 CONSULTEE COMMENTS

Comments have been received from the following consultees:

HCC Countryside Services: no objection

Natural England: no objection

Historic England: objection

Conservation: no objection subject to conditions

9 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

None received

10 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The NPPF (para 190, 193, 194 and 196) requires account to be taken of the significance of affected heritage assets when considering the impact of a proposal, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Great weight should be attached to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of the level of potential harm; any harm to or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, including its setting, requires clear and convincing justification. This guidance requires less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Impact on the significance of the Grade I Listed Building and Fordingbridge Conservation Area

The Church is Grade I listed and located in a prominent position within the Fordingbridge Conservation Area, and the nave roof in particular is highly visible within the Conservation Area.

Historic England (HE) have been consulted as the church is a Grade I listed building. They have raised objection to the replacement of the existing lead roof with Terne Coated Stainless Steel (TCSS) as they are of the view that this would lead to less than substantial harm to the heritage asset. They do not support the pre-emptive removal of lead from roofs not affected by theft, as changing the traditional roof form could detract from the building's appearance and significance.

The church are deeply concerned that simply recovering the nave roof in lead will make the building a target for lead thieves which is a problem the church has been afflicted with in the past. Lead was stolen from the north porch in 2007, and the north aisle was stripped of this lead covering in 2009. After these incidents the church was granted permission from the Diocese to recover the north aisle and adjacent roofs in terne-coated stainless steel.

Historic England consider that the roof of the nave with its steep pitch contributes to the prominence of the building, whereas the Tower roof is hardly visible behind the crenellated parapet. They are objecting as they are of the view that proposed materials would be incongruous. This is due to its bright and shiny finish on such a dominant component of the church would result in an adverse and harmful impact on the surrounding landscape. The existing traditional lead roof (albeit an early 20th Century replacement) appears as a valuable traditional feature and a key component of the Listed church's original design which contributes to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Even though Historic England accept that the existing lead roof has come to the end of its life and proposed replacement with Terne Coated Stainless Steel is considered as a preventative anti-theft measure after lead theft, in this case their view is that the previous thefts at the Church are historic (occurring over 10 years ago) and were from less visible areas of the roof. Due to its prominent position, they take the position that the risk of future lead thefts on this building are not so high as to justify the pre-emptive replacement of traditional roofing materials in this case.

In normal circumstances the use of like for like materials would be sought, but Historic England have recently published a document entitled '*Church Roof Replacement Using Terne Coated Stainless Steel. Technical advice note following theft of lead from historic church roofs*' issued 28 February 2020 which advocates that TCSS is the most durable alternative to lead following theft. Due to its thickness level it is difficult to remove from the roof and has a lower scrap value than lead. Although the preference is always for the repair of an historic building in the same material there are incidences of previous thefts from the building and if this occurred there could be subsequent damage to the interior roof, which also has architectural significance. The loss of historically appropriate material does present some harm to significance, but this is supported by the Historic England Guidance referred to above. Even though TCSS would have a shiny finish when first installed, this would quickly dull due to the oxidisation of the coating. The benefits that would result in maintaining the church and to protect and preserve the important underlying roof structure and historic details are such that the proposals are considered acceptable.

Historic England are a statutory consultee, so their comments need to be given due consideration. However, as stated in the NPPF a balanced view needs to be made against the identified harm and the public benefits arising from the changes.

Even though there have been no recent incidents of lead theft in relation to this specific building, its prominent position has not deterred thieves in the past and there are no guarantees that future attacks on the building will not be made. The agent has advised that there is an alarm in place but this cannot guarantee that theft will not occur. The lead roof on both the tower and nave are coming to the end of their life, as confirmed by a Quinquennial survey undertaken in 2018. In the light of this it is reasonable to replace it, and as the building has been subject to lead theft in the past an alternative covering could be considered.

TCSS is considered as a suitable alternative to lead as identified in the Historic England Guidance. Details submitted with the application show examples of where this material has been used. It is therefore considered, on balancing the issues set out and justifications provided, that the proposed replacement materials would be appropriate for this listed building within the conservation area, particularly once oxidisation has occurred.

Furthermore, if the lead was removed from the roof, this could have a detrimental impact on the interior fabric of the building which also has historic and architectural significance. St Mary's Church has a thriving community and having to constantly finance the replacement of the lead roof, which is an expensive material, would impact on this and may impact on other maintenance to the building.

The lead roof on the south aisle roof will be retained as this is currently still in a good condition, and therefore there is no reason for it not to remain in situ.

Therefore, on balance it is considered that in this instance the replacement of the roof of the nave and tower as proposed with TCSS would be in the public benefit and this would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the Listed Building and Conservation Area.

Historic England have not commented on the relining of the gutters, where it is also proposed to use TCSS. The use of this material to reline the gutters would not impact on the appearance or significance of the building.

Footpaths

Row Fordingbridge 97 cuts across the churchyard, and the proposed works must not interfere with this. An informative note can be added to the consent to ensure the safety of users of the footpath.

11 CONCLUSION

For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the replacement of the lead roofing with TCSS would result in less than significant harm to the heritage asset this is balanced against the benefit of maintaining the roof and protecting the interior of the building and the potential further cost of replacing a lead roof in the event this is stolen.

12 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None

13. RECOMMENDATION

Grant Subject to Conditions

Proposed Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1176-01-200, 1176-01-201-A, 176-01-202 Rev A, Nave and tower roof works etc recovering and repair works specification including Design Statement, Brief Heritage Statement

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision of the development.

3. Before development commences, samples to be used shall be made available to view on site or exact details of the roofing materials shall be submitted; these details to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the character and architectural interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park. (Part 2: Sites and Development Management).

4. Before development commences, the following details shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - a) Large scale drawings showing details of the roll sections
 - b) Large scale drawings showing details of the perimeter details and how this will mitigate any visual discordance

Development shall only take place in accordance with those details which have been approved.

Reason: To protect the character and architectural interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park. (Part 2: Sites and Development Management).

Further Information:

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PLANNING COMMITTEE

July 2020

St Mary's Church
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20/10431

Scale 1:1250

N.B. If printing this plan from the internet, it will not be to scale.

